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Ministry of Education

## MINISTER TOURS VAN TECH'S $37-MILLION SEISMIC UPGRADE

VANCOUVER – Education Minister Shirley Bond got a firsthand look at $37 million in seismic upgrades underway at Vancouver Technical secondary school during a visit to the school today.

"These upgrades will make Van Tech safer in the event of an earthquake," Bond said. "Earthquake safety is a priority for our government – that's why we are spending $1.5 billion to upgrade B.C. schools in high-risk earthquake zones. No other government in the history of this province has committed that kind of investment to protecting the safety of students and staff."

The funding is being used to structurally upgrade the main classroom block of the school as well as the adjacent auditorium and boiler room. This will complete the required seismic upgrading of the school and will ensure the continued use of the school for existing and future students.

"We recognize the need to keep our children safe and we are making sure B.C. schools like Vancouver Technical are meeting the latest safety standards," said Bond. "Our students and staff spend a large part of their day in the classroom, so it's important that they are learning and teaching in safe, modern schools."

Bond was visiting the school as part of an unprecedented commitment to public education in British Columbia: she and Premier Gordon Campbell are visiting every school district in the province.

The Vancouver school district will contribute up to $5 million from its annual facility grant funding for non-seismic renovations associated with the project.

"The Vancouver school district takes great pride in putting students first," said board chair Ken Denike. "This project will ensure that our staff and students are safe in their school."

Since 2001, the Province has invested $71.4 million in the Vancouver school district to complete 24 capital projects. During the same period, the Province invested $967 million on projects around B.C., including 26 new schools, 27 replacements, 140 additions and 28 renovations. By the end of 2007-08, the Province will have invested more than $2.2 billion in school capital and maintenance projects across British Columbia.

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Media contact: Corinna Filion
Public Affairs Bureau
Ministry of Education
250 356-5963

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